



# The HONOR GIRL

*by*  
Jean K. Baird





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RALPH CAME HURRYING UP WITH SALLY PLATTE.



# THE HONOR GIRL

BY

JEAN K. BAIRD

Author of "Elizabeth Hobart at Exeter Hall,"  
"Danny," "Cash Three," Etc.

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DRAWINGS BY

R. G. VOSBURGH

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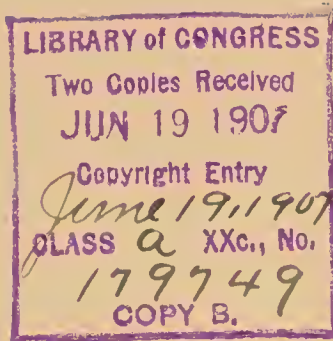
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# THE HONOR GIRL

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## CHAPTER I.

### A MISHAP.

MARY O'BRIEN came from the assembly-room into the girls' cloak-room. She had intended passing directly through and joining some of her friends who were waiting outside for her, to take the first car for home. But her plans went astray because of her high heels. It could not be denied that they were high, and that they curved well under her insteps. These shoes had been worn for several months. They were run down, and her foot twisted at every step. She was not at all comfortable, but consoled herself that her shoes were at least fashionable. They were the most stylish that Cox & Swain had put in their show windows. Everyone—that is, everyone who paid any attention to the subtle changes of fashion—knew that they were quite “the latest.”



As she quitted the assembly-room, one of these high heels caught in the binding of her skirt. There was the sound of something giving way. Marie gave a sudden jerk, and, grasping the edge of the door, saved herself from falling. Catching up her skirt, she sought for the source of the trouble. The binding was badly worn all around. But in the back it was really ragged, and now there was fully a yard of velveteen dragging after her.

She went back to a more secluded part of the cloak-room. Sitting down, she looked about her for pins. There was no lack of them in her make-up. They were present by the dozen. The question to be decided was, which place could best spare them, or which parts would be most likely to hold together until she reached home. It took some thinking. With a class pin, one safety, and two stick pins, she succeeded at length in fastening up the binding. While she worked, she heard the trolley pass the corner of the square, and her friends went off without her. She must wait a half-hour for another car for home. This meant a cold and a hurried dinner if she would get back to school for the second session.

Thoughts of a lunch on what the other members of the family had left gave her no pleasurable emotions. To-day's dinner would not be of the sort that would improve with waiting. Last night's



supper had taken the last frying piece from the ham. To-day the bone was to be boiled with potatoes and drop dumplings. There would be a pot of strong black coffee to go with it, pickled tripe perhaps, and some pie. But the original quantity would be no indication of the amount likely to be left, for there were three others in the family, none of whom suffered from lack of appetite.

Gladys was the youngest. Marie never thought of her without a feeling of satisfaction. She herself had named her. Of all the children on Stump Street, Swampoodle, or Smoky Hollow, none other bore so elegant or refined a name. There were Marys, and Maggies, and Susans, and Ellens by the dozen, but no other Gladys.

As Marie pinned away at the binding on her skirt, the door from Miss Warde's class-room opened. Several girls came out and stood near the door of the class-room. In order to go down-stairs, Marie must pass quite close to them. This she did not wish to do, so, at their entrance, she quickly dropped her skirt, sat erect, elevated her chin, and endeavored to appear disdainful and haughty. She pretended not to see them, although she missed no detail of their manner or dress.

Marie always felt out of sorts when she met these girls. "The proud, disagreeable things!" she said to herself when she saw them.



“They think no one’s good enough for them. They’re not so much! Sally Platte thinks she is the only person about. Her father don’t make so much money—not nearly so much as mine does. He’s only principal at the Congress Street building; but to see her, you’d think that he’d just bought out the state. I’m sure she don’t dress anything to brag of. That is only a dimity she has on now. You can buy it for ten cents a yard. I never had so cheap a dress.”

She looked down complacently upon her blue silk foulard. This was a season of blue and green combinations, and Marie was keeping up with the fashions. The lace insertion above the set-on ruffle had been a constant source of pleasure to her. She had introduced the style into school, and had had the satisfaction of seeing others follow her lead. She looked from her own to Sally Platte’s dress. Sally’s was made of cheap material after a plain shirtwaist pattern, and without trimming of any kind, except machine stitching about the skirt and collar. She noticed, too, Sally’s unpretentious style of drawing her hair back, when all the schoolgirl world was wearing pompadours.

Marie could have overlooked Sally’s lack of style had her manner been more free. Three years before, Marie had come from the eighth grade in the Fifth Ward—“The Bloody Fifth,” it was called



—and had entered the high school. During all this time she had sat in class, and had recited with Sally Platte and Isabel Harvey, yet their acquaintance had never gone beyond a mere salutation in passing each other in the hall.

Marie herself had been transformed somewhat since leaving the “Bloody Fifth.” She looked back with scorn upon the times when she had been ignorant of the ways of society, and this ignorance she attributed to her environment at that time; for, say the best you could of it, “The Fifth” was not marked by an excess of culture. Coming to the Jackson Avenue High School gave her a wholly different view of life. Whether it was the correct one was yet to be seen.

Marie felt there was a difference between her friends and these girls from Congress and Kennedy Streets. Just what it was, she could not tell. It was not a matter of money, for her friends were the better off financially; nor was it a matter of dress, for Sally Platte, in her cheap dimitry, was the most popular of the Congress Street set.

Marie could not fully grasp the situation, yet she tried to meet the conditions of school society as she saw them. In less than two months of this school life, she led in the size of her pompadour and



in fine clothes. While other girls wore percale shirtwaists, Marie wore silk—cheap, thin silk to be sure, but silk.

When she had gone to school in the “Bloody Fifth,” she had been known as Mary O’Brien. The name had been pronounced with a tone and accent that left no doubt as to the native land of her ancestors. When she came to Jackson Avenue, the old order changed. She became “Marie” to her friends and “Miss O’Brean” to her instructors. This new pronunciation was pleasing to the girl. It had a high, patrician sound, yet it failed to work the change she coveted. The Janes, Sallys, and Marys went on their way, welcomed into the most exclusive sets, yet Marie O’Brean knew no more friends than Mary O’Brien had known.

Her own set of friends were fond of her. She was generous, frank, and whole-hearted. She was quick to learn, and in class work stood second to none. She had conquered her own little world, yet she was not satisfied. She was ambitious to conquer the other worlds about her. She had made no attempts to be friendly with Sally Platte and her friends. On the contrary, she stood aloof, and responded to their greetings in a manner calculated to show them that she was wholly indifferent to any overtures that they might make. Yet these girls went on their way seemingly un-



conscious that Miss O'Brean of the Fifth Ward had ignored them.

In the Fifth Ward, Marie had always been one of the star performers on public occasions. She had sung solos, played the organ, recited, and contributed to the *Eighth-Grade Gazette*. There she had been a necessity. But here she had been appointed on no committees, had sung no solos, and had recited only when the course demanded it. She took little pleasure in thoughts of commencement. She felt that she would not be asked to take part. She would be but one of fifty to walk across the stage and take their diplomas from the hand of the principal. There her part would end, with no opportunity to show her gown, and for three years she had planned to have the most elaborate dress of any in the class.

Lately she had given Sally Platte and her friends a wide berth. Now she waited in the cloak-room, hoping they would pass on, and she could go down-stairs without meeting them. She waited until almost time for the next car; but the girls made no move to go.

Marie took down her hat. It was of white chiffon, her very best. Picking up her white silk parasol, with its mass of flounces, she went to the end of the cloak-room. As she approached the girls,



she threw back her head, gave them a supercilious nod, and was about to pass on.

But at that instant the car went flying past. Going home now was impossible, and dinner was not to be thought of. She hesitated a moment at the top of the stairway. As she was about to turn back, Sally Platte addressed her: "Have you missed your car, Marie?"

"Yes, Miss Platte." Her words were accompanied by a toss of her head. She had been standing with her back toward the girls, yet when Sally addressed her she did not turn about.

"You will miss your dinner?" continued Sally.

"Yes, I shall miss lunch." She emphasized the last word. She did not wish Sally Platte to think they were so behind the times as to have a midday dinner.

Isabel stepped forward and was about to speak, when Sally continued:

"Come home with me. You know I live at the end of the square."

"I was about to ask her to come with me," said Isabel, "although it is little dinner or lunch I could offer. Mary's mother is sick, and we insisted upon her going home, and Alma knows





MARIE PINNED AWAY AT THE BINDING OF HER SKIRT.







little about cooking. Mother is cooking this week, and we say that we are not quite sure what we are eating. She says that the meals possess the charm of uncertainty. So perhaps it would be better to allow Sally to give the invitation to-day. Some other time I hope you may go with me, Marie."

Gathering up her train, Marie nervously tapped the tips of her patent leather shoes with her parasol. Isabel's remark surprised her. Marie considered it a little bit of affectation, for Judge Harvey was a millionaire, and his wife one of the most brilliant women of the town. To think of her cooking was ridiculous! Sally Platte had turned back into the cloak-room for her hat. Returning, she said, "Will you come with me, Marie?" For a moment Marie hesitated. She knew not what to say. The situation was so unexpected and so new.








## CHAPTER II.

### A DAY OF BLUNDERS.

MARIE had heard a great deal of Mrs. Platte, and had seen her frequently. She dreaded meeting her. Mrs. Platte was a woman who never went down the street without wearing gloves, had a colored woman to wash her hair, went in a hired cab to make calls, left a card when she called, and always spoke of her husband as "Mr. Platte." All of which, in Marie's mind, marked her as excessively proud and haughty.

The women on Stump Street, where Marie lived, never called at their neighbors' front doors and never referred to their husbands except by their given names or their surnames without a title. Marie's mother always spoke of her husband as "O'Brien, he." She was considered somewhat conservative in consequence. Mrs. Daly said "the ould man," while with others "Dennis, he" and "Moike" were much in favor.

Because of Mrs. Platte's reputed pride, Marie hesitated to



accept the invitation. She disliked the thought of being patronized. Her mind quickly took in the situation, and reached a conclusion before Sally was conscious that she hesitated.

"I will go with you," she said aloud, while she added to herself, "and show them that they are not so much. Mr. Platte has no big position. Pap makes more than he does. He's only a school-teacher, and Pap's a boss."

"Perhaps, then, we had better start at once," said Sally. "It will hurry us to finish lunch if we do not."

Passing down the stairway together, they walked to the end of the square. Here Isabel left them and turned down Kennedy Street.

"Isabel has a long walk," said Sally. "Fortunately, she has no class the first period in the afternoon, so she can take her own time."

"I should think she would take a car, or their coachman would drive up for her," responded Marie, with a funny little air.

"She enjoys the walk, if she has time. The cars are unpleasantly crowded at noon, and the air is so impure that she does not care to ride. This walk to and from school is all the exercise she gets; for, as you know, Isabel is compelled to study hard for all



she learns, and she has little time except for lessons. Lessons are easy for you. It has never seemed to be any work for you to prepare your recitations."

Marie twirled her parasol and flung back her head as she replied: "I have never found lessons difficult, but then I can give them all my time. Music and lessons and a little bit of embroidery are all I ever bother about."

Sally made no reply. They had come to the path leading up to the house. Marie looked about her. She had not seen Sally's home before. Now she felt a sense of relief when she saw the place. It was an unpretentious affair, without gable windows, turrets, or stained glass. It was not nearly so fine a house as Marie's own home. There was a palm on the porch, and a great jar of flowers, but they were common ones, black-eyed Susans and field daisies. The fields near Marie's home were full of them, but she had never thought them worth the plucking.

While she was ascending the steps, Marie looked down upon her gown with a feeling of dissatisfaction. She possessed a waist of pale blue taffeta with a bolero of Battenberg that looked like handwork. She regretted now that she had not worn it. It was soiled across the shoulders, but that could be scarcely noticed. She



might have worn that with a black skirt, or at least put on a bolero over this waist. This, too, was the first time in weeks that she had not worn her watch. It was too bad that she had not. She wished Mrs. Platte to believe that she knew what was expected of a girl in the way of dress.

Sally opened the door, and they entered the broad hall, which, to Marie, looked bare and unfurnished. The floor, with the exception of a large rug in the center, was uncarpeted. There were two stiff, old-fashioned chairs of wood, without a scrap of plush or velvet. At the side stood a long narrow clock, reaching almost to the ceiling.

Marie was surprised that a woman as "fine" as Mrs. Platte would have such an old-fashioned piece of furniture in the house. Onyx clocks with athletic bronze riders decorating them were all the rage.

The stairs were bare. They were not even hardwood, and they had been painted. Marie observed all these details while she stood in the hall taking off her hat. The door into the parlor was closed. Marie was curious to see if it was rich in the glories of many-colored plushes. But when their wraps had been laid aside,



Sally Platte led the way past this to a second door opening into the living-room, where Mrs. Platte sat sewing.

“Mother,” said Sally, stepping aside to allow Marie to enter, “this is my classmate, Marie O’Brean. She has missed her car. I have asked her home to lunch.”

Mrs. Platte arose and laid aside her sewing. Coming to Marie, she shook hands with her. “I am glad you came,” she said. She drew forward a chair for her visitor, then took up her work again.

As she bent her head over her sewing, Marie had an excellent opportunity for observing her. She looked like a queen, or as Marie thought a queen must look, although, to the surprise of the girl, she was wearing a simple shirtwaist suit of an inexpensive material. Marie’s confidence came back to her. She forgot about the blue silk waist with its bolero jacket that looked as though it were hand-made. She forgot, too, about the chatelaine watch that she had neglected to wear. She was satisfied now with the appearance she believed she was making. That her skirt was spotted and its binding loose gave her no uneasiness. She talked glibly, and expressed herself without hesitation concerning all matters that were brought up.



"Sally said you missed your car," said Mrs. Platte. "Does that mean that you live out of town, or in a distant part of town?"

"I live in the suburbs," said Marie.

Mrs. Platte made no further inquiries. Marie's statement could not be disputed. There were many suburbs of the city, and of varied repute, including Hazelwood, Engleside, Stump Street, and Shintown.

After that remark, Marie settled back in her chair. She was pleased with herself. That "suburbs" had just the proper touch. Figuratively, she gave herself a pat on the back. Here was she sitting and conversing glibly, as one to the manner born, with those who were friends with judges and senators, and who were known to have entertained the governor. Here she was, who, three hours before, had known no one beyond Stump Street, sitting at home among them, the best dressed of them all.

As her confidence increased, her inspection grew broader. She looked about the room. There was little to see. The floors were old and had been painted. A well-darned rug, made of strips of carpet, covered the greater part of the floor. An old-fashioned davenport covered with cushions filled one end of the room. There was a piano, and cases filled with books. The piano was guiltless



of any decorations. No vases or pictures or easel graced its broad top. The chairs were of wood without upholstering of any description.

Sally had immediately excused herself and passed into the dining-room. Marie appreciated this absence. She believed she understood the reason. When Sally came back, Marie straightened her shoulders, and said with the air of one who understood what lay behind the scenes, "I hope you didn't go to any extra trouble, Miss Platte, change the cloth or cook anything extra. What is good enough for you is good enough for me."

"No, I didn't," said Sally, simply. Then, turning to her mother, she said, "I saw father turn the corner."

Laying aside her sewing, Mrs. Platte arose and went into the hall as her husband entered the house.

Marie had seen the flush that had come to the woman's cheek, and the light that had come to her eyes. Her quick eye caught the greeting that took place. She turned toward Sally with an exasperating smile, "He acts just as though he was her fellow, don't he?"

"Her lover? Why not?" asked Sally, as she arose to greet her father.



The dinner was a revelation to Marie. There was little on the table when they entered the dining-room. A napkin, knife, fork, and several spoons were at each place.

Marie, to prove herself at ease, the moment she was seated, unfolded her napkin, and, raising her glass to her lips, sipped slowly, with a suggestion of languor. Languor, she considered, was one of the prerequisites of fashionable life. When she raised her eyes, she saw that the others were sitting quietly at their places. Her face flushed. Hereafter she would not be so quick. She would keep her eyes open, and let some one else lead.

When she saw Sally bow her head, she did the same. But she did not fully understand until Mr. Platte gave thanks.

Then Sally arose and went into the kitchen. She returned with a tray of plates already served.

"What do you think of my little maid?" asked Mrs. Platte. "I do not know how we could manage the house without her."

"It is too bad that she must do such work," said Marie. "I always thought you were able to keep a hired girl."

"We keep one servant; but there is too much work for one pair of hands. So we all help a little, and no one finds it hard."

"I like housework," said Sally. "And I have really been work-



ing. There is no make-believe about it. Bena is going back to Sweden for a visit during the summer, and I am to do all the cooking. Do you cook much, Marie?"

"I do not know the least thing about it. I don't suppose that I ever will. So long as I am at home, of course, it is not necessary. Next year I expect to go to a finishing school, and, of course, will not need it there!"

"But you may have a home of your own, some time. You will need to know how to cook then!"

"If I ever marry," said Marie, with decision, "I shall marry some one who is rich enough to keep hired girls. What would be the use of my going to school if all I expected to do was to stay over a stove all day long?"

"But it is surely a pleasure to know how work should be done, and to teach and direct others. I thought education meant that—to make the best of ourselves in every position," said Mr. Platte.

Marie tossed her head. "I never thought of it in that way at all. I have studied Latin for three years. I can't see how that is going to help me make coffee and fry potatoes better."

"Not just that, Marie. You may see later how keeping your



mind on Latin several hours each day will help you to keep your mind on more essential matters when you have to meet them."

When the meal was finished, Sally arose and took from a small side-table a flat glass bowl which was set on a small plate. The bowl was almost filled with water. A spray of heliotrope floated on the top.

Marie was learning. She determined to go slowly and watch what the others did. So when Sally held the bowl before her, she took it and set it down beside her plate. Sally waited a moment, then, with a glance at her mother, went back to her place at the table.

Feeling that something was expected of her, Marie, at last, raised the bowl to her lips and drank.

"That little bit of heliotrope gives it quite a flavor," she said. "Who would have believed it of so small a flower?"

"Shall we be excused?" said Mrs. Platte. Arising, they passed into the living-room.

Marie went down to the car alone that evening. As she boarded the car, she saw an acquaintance among the passengers. This was a young man, a student at one of the technical schools of the city. Incidentally, he was paying his way by collecting



bills for a wholesale grocery. Marie, until to-day, had looked upon his acquaintance as something to be desired.

He was a different type of young man from those she met at Swampoodle and Stump Streets. She expressed it by saying that he was "genteel." To-day she saw him in a different light. For the first time she noted that his coat was ill-fitting and was worn bare at the elbows.

As she entered the car, he arose to give his seat to her. But with a mere inclination of her head, she passed haughtily to the front of the car. As she went down the aisle, Marie was conscious that every eye was upon her. She found someone whom she knew and sat down beside her. Soon her voice was heard above the noise of the trolley.

"No; I did not go home for lunch. Sally Platte asked me to go home with her and I could not very well refuse. Isabel Harvey, Judge Harvey's daughter, you know, asked me to go with her, but Sally was ahead. However, I can go any day with Isabel."

So she talked until the car stopped to let her off. As she went down the street, several people turned to look after her. One benevolent-looking old gentleman stopped and was about to speak to her. But she met his glance with such a haughty stare that he



seemed to think better of it, and passed on. She felt that she was creating a sensation, and attributed it to the fine appearance she made.

A group of street Arabs were playing in the mud at the street corner. They shouted after her in terms of derision. She turned to awe them with a haughty stare. Then she understood why people had looked after her.



### CHAPTER III.

#### MARIE'S HOME.



AY, missis, how much do you get for sweeping the streets?" cried one boy as he executed a war-dance on the edge of the curb.

"Get on to Mrs. Queen of Sheba and her train," shrieked a second.

"She's gettin' too big for her clothes. That's what she is," cried a third, and together they hooted, and laughed, and pushed, and tumbled over one another in the excess of their humor.

Marie had tried to ignore them, but the haughtiness of her demeanor had had the effect of increasing their cries. At length she looked back. One glance was sufficient to bring the blood to her cheeks. A yard or more of dirty, ragged velveteen was trailing after her. Several large safety pins hung to it.

In an instant she had dropped her parasol, and, catching the binding, tore it off and threw it into the gutter. Then with cheeks



aflame, she walked on, glancing neither to the right nor left to see whose eyes were upon her.

Reaching home, she entered by the front door, dropped her hat upon the first chair, and passed into the kitchen. The house appeared deserted. On the sunny side the blinds were all at the top of the windows, the sun beat in, and the rooms were insufferably hot. The dinner table, set between the two windows of the kitchen, had not been cleared. One end of the table cloth had been turned up to cover the dishes. A swarm of flies were having easy entrance through the partly open screen door.

Marie passed out to the large covered porch which ran along the rear of the house. Here stood a patent washer, several tubs, and a boiler. All were partly filled with cold, sudsy wash water. A wet washboard had been set against the side of the house. From this trickled a line of greasy water.

A barefooted, dirty-faced child was playing in the yard, digging up the earth with a pointed stick, and trying to coax the wastewater down little channels into the holes. Then she mixed it into a soft mud of a consistency suited to the making of mud-cakes. All the while she sang in a high treble childish voice, "Every coon in our town has a raglan."



One observing closely might have seen beneath this dirt and mass of tangled hair that the child had great beauty. Her eyes were large and gray, with an expression such as the old-time artists loved to give to the pictures of the Christ-child. With every downward glance, her long-fringed lashes swept her cheeks. Her hair, uncombed and tangled, showed soft ripples of brown which turned into red wherever the sun kissed it.

She threw aside her stick when she saw Marie, and, running, threw herself into her sister's arms. In spite of her face being covered with dirt, Marie hugged and kissed her again and again.

"Where's mother?" she asked, letting the child down.

"She's talking over the back fence with Mrs. Diller."

Marie crossed the yard to the fence which separated the O'Briens and the Dillers.

Mrs. O'Brien, in a blue calico wrapper and with her checked gingham apron flung over her head to protect her from the sun, was leaning over the fence talking to Mrs. Diller. She was a thin, wiry, little woman, with a vast amount of energy when once her ambition was aroused. But she had lived on Stump Street so long that she had gradually become like the locality, until she had neither aspirations nor inspirations beyond those of the other women of



the neighborhood. She had by degrees grown indifferent to her own appearance, and to that of her house. O'Brien, too, had fallen into joining the men at "Jack's Place" in the evening. He was not a drinking man, but he was falling into the way of becoming one.

Marie was away at school all day. In the evening she entertained her friends or went out with some of the young people. As she did not usually change her working-dress, Mrs. O'Brien felt shy about meeting these gay young people, and, consequently, kept herself in the background.

Gladys was too small to be much company. So the only outlet for Mrs. O'Brien's conversational powers was a talk over the back fence with Mrs. Diller, who lived next door. Mrs. Diller had no conversational ability. Her responses were limited to "You bet" and "That's right." On these two expressions she ran the scale of vocal inflection and expressed all the emotion and thought of which she was capable.

Marie was not surprised to see the house in the condition in which she found it, the washing undone, and her mother gossiping over the back fence. She had not been above such a pastime herself. She had found this same back fence an excellent place to tell of the victories and social achievements of school life on Jackson



Avenue. Although Mrs. Diller was no talker, Marie found her an admirable listener, whose two expressions always were inserted at the proper place.

To-day Marie took no part in the talk. She stood by her mother listening, with Gladys clinging to her hand. Marie glanced down at the child and for the first time noticed that her hair had not been combed.

"Did no one comb your hair to-day, Gladys?" she asked as though this were an entirely new condition of affairs.

"No," said Mrs. O'Brien, "I was too busy. I didn't have time. Ask Mrs. Diller if I haven't been going all day."

"That's right," replied the witness.

"I haven't finished the wash but a few minutes and ran out here to speak to Mrs. Diller. We must be a little neighborly."

"That's right."

"Do you wish me to help you empty the tubs?" asked Marie.

"No, let them stand until to-morrow. They don't hurt anything there. You would only spoil that good skirt if you would go to put them away."

"That's right."

"I could change my skirt in a few minutes."



“Well, it don’t seem no use to do that. Some one’s bound to drop in this evening, and you will want to be so you can see them. There’s no reason for you looking sloppy. Folks can’t be young but once in their lives. So be it while you can, I always say.”

“That’s right.”

Mrs. O’Brien stood a little in awe of her daughter. Marie had been first in her work in the grades, and Mr. Oberlin, the principal of the Jackson Avenue High School, had told the girl’s father that no one in the school excelled her in brightness. This meant a great deal to the mother, and she looked upon her daughter as little less than a prodigy. It would not have mattered how tired she was, or how much she desired the tubs to be put away, she would have sent the girl away with an excuse.

Marie went back to the house and into the parlor. The furnishing of this room was one of the conditions of the girl’s life with which she was fully satisfied. She looked at the patent rockers, upholstered in red and green plush, with a feeling of gratification. The painted design upon the piano cover was the work of her own hands. And the arrangement of photographs on easels and in frames, like a photographer’s show-room, had elicited the admiration of all her girl friends.



She sat down at the piano and turned over the music. Gladys had followed her and stood close by the instrument, ready to join in the singing, humming as she did so, "Every coon in our town has a raglan!"

To judge from her assortment of music, Marie's taste preferred the offerings of popular vaudeville. There were "coon" songs and love ditties by the dozen. She began to play and sing, Gladys joining in wherever she could catch the words.

At last, Marie heard her mother come into the kitchen and fuss about the stove, preparatory to getting supper. Marie's heart smote her. She knew her mother had put out a large wash and was tired. Yet she knew that it would be useless to offer to help her. So she continued her playing, singing through her repertoire of rag-time songs, while from the kitchen came the smell of boiling coffee and frying ham.

Her father, in overalls, passed by the parlor window on his way to the back of the house. The porch was his place for washing his face and hands and smoothing his hair before he sat down to the table.

Marie had a great love for her father. When she saw that he had come, she stopped her playing, and hurried to the porch to



talk with him. He was a quiet, gentle-mannered man, a machinist, and by steady, quiet attention to business, had become foreman of large shops, with hundreds of men working under him. He had had no advantages of school, such as he was giving to his daughter. He was exceedingly proud of her and her attainments, although he rarely spoke of them. But her standing first in the grades had been more to him than all the promotions that he had ever had, and they had not been few. He knew little of the world beyond the shops and his fellow workmen, but he possessed an inborn sense of the fitness of things. He knew what he desired for his daughter, but he did not know how to set about securing it for her. He knew that money was able to secure much, and, in his blind way of seeking for the best for her, he spent money lavishly.

She sat on the steps, with both hands clasped about one knee, and her head resting against the post of the porch. Her father looked at her fondly. She was a pretty girl and a bright one, but as the father looked at her he was not wholly satisfied.

“Did you wear that dress to school to-day, daughter?” he asked, as he lathered his hands well with soap.

“Yes; it is the foulard that I got last spring. Why? Don’t



you want me to wear it to school? It didn't cost much. Mother bought it at a sale."

He rubbed the soap slowly between his hands, then dipped them into the water before he answered. He was one to think well before he spoke.

"I wasn't thinking about what it cost. I was thinking that it did not look just right. There's spots on the front. If I was you, I would not wear it where I'd meet so many coming and going. Haven't you something trimmer you could wear? If you haven't, we shall see to it that you have."

"I have my new blue silk waist and a black silk skirt, and a blue tailored suit. But my suit is just new, and I don't like to wear it to school right off."

"Wear that, daughter. Wear a shirtwaist with it and have your skirts well drawn up about your waist, and I wouldn't have ribbons flying about. The superintendent's daughter was down to-day. She was dressed plain, but was as neat as a pin, and I thought she looked well, just the way I would like to see you look. She has been away to boarding school where they teach girls how to act. I asked her father all about it. If it is good for her, I don't know why it shouldn't be good for you, and I mean to send



you, if you wish to go when you have finished here. I don't mean to have you kept back."

Marie had not told her mother where she had been for lunch. But now as she talked with her father, she told him all about it, omitting nothing of the day's happenings.

He was pleased that she had been with Sally Platte, though not because she stood well socially. He never gave such matters a thought. But she was the sort of a girl he wished his daughter to be.

Mrs. O'Brien came to the door. "Supper's ready when you are clean," she said. Marie went into the kitchen, followed by her father, and they sat down at the table. Marie looked about her in disgust. "Why can't we eat in the dining-room?" she asked.

"It means a good many extra steps, and I was busy. I had such a wash to-day. You had four white petticoats yourself, Marie."

"I hate to eat in the kitchen. It is so hot here."

"It will last only a short time, Mary," said her father gently. "Didn't you hear your mother say she was tired? Take what is set before you and don't complain."

She sat a moment at the table. The space was limited and





SHE WAS LEANING OVER THE FENCE, TALKING TO MRS. DILLER.







the dishes were crowded. She cut her meat and made an effort to eat. At last she laid down her fork, and burst into tears.

“Whatever ails her?” cried her mother. “Well, did you ever see the like of that?”

Marie had risen from the table, and, crying violently, had hurried from the room.

Mrs. O’Brien arose as though to follow her.

“Let her alone. Let her alone,” cried the father. “Let her have her cry out. It will do her good. She has been learning a few things this day.”

So Mrs. O’Brien resumed her place at the table.








## CHAPTER IV.

### WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?

MARIE wore her jacket suit with a shirtwaist to school the following morning. Remembering her father's suggestion of the previous evening, she drew her skirt up well about the waist, making it look neat and trim. The tears of the evening before were forgotten, although even now she felt like crying when she thought of the blunders she had made. It hurt her most of all to think that her father was not fully satisfied with her, and she felt that he was not.

She would have done anything in the world to make him happy. This superintendent's daughter had pleased him. Marie knew only too well that she was not at all as this Miss Aschom. She followed her father's suggestion, however. She put aside the ribbons and bows with which she was in the habit of decking herself, and put on a plain stock and belt.

She sincerely wished her father's approbation. With this in



mind, she dressed earlier than usual, and went down-stairs before her father had started to the shop. He was just quitting the kitchen when she entered, and had no time to stop to talk. But Marie noticed the quick glance he gave her dress, although he said nothing.

“I’ll go as far as the corner with you,” she said. Slipping her arm through his, they walked to the corner together. The father kept his eyes in her direction, as though she was too attractive not to look at. In a way he understood the reason for the crying spell of the evening. He felt that a new element of the girl’s nature was awakening. They walked the length of the square without a word. Then he softly patted her hand and said: “Is it that you are getting dissatisfied with your home, and your old daddy?”

“Oh, daddy, daddy, don’t think of such a thing as that! Dissatisfied with you? Why, you are the best man in the world! It was not that which made me cry. Whatever made you think of such a thing?”

“It’s nature. There’s many a child that has looked down upon her folks because they did not talk book talk. I’ve been waiting and watching to see if my girl was of stuff like that. More than one has said to me that it would not pay when I was telling them



of your going to the high school and studying all those things, and mebbe you would go to a woman's college. That you'd only learn enough to despise them what brought you into the world, and not enough to appreciate the love and care they have given you. But I said then to them, and I'll say it again to you, 'She's my girl; I'm her father, and I'll do a father's duty by her, and give her a chance. If she is the kind that can't see the man under the grease and dirt, and the talk that hain't in books, it is no fault of mine. She's mine, and I'll do my duty by her.' "

She clung to his arm. "Why, daddy, you could not think such a thing of me?"

"How could I know? You have been only a baby until now. How could I tell what effect being down there among the swells was going to have on you? But I meant to wait and let you set your own pace. Nothing I might have said would have saved you acting the fool if your mind was set that way. But you seemed to be holding your own pretty fair. It was only last night that you seemed changed a bit."

"But not to you, daddy! I could never be that to you. I don't know what the matter was. But it was not with you. It was all myself, daddy. You think I'm bright, and know just stacks



of things, but there's so many things I know nothing about; things that a girl should know; that other girls do know. I'm just too dumb to live alongside of some girls. 'They're different up there, daddy. I'm not like them up there.'

"You suit me, just as you are. But if there's any way I could help you out, you know you only need to tell me. Is it anything now that I could be a-tellin' you?"

"No." Then, suddenly, as though he might misunderstand, and feel hurt, "No man could tell me. It's little ways that women should know—of doing this, and that. I was worried dreadful about myself not knowing more, and not being able to do stacks of things, and that set me crying."

"Well, Mary, there's one thing I've learned in my forty-odd years of knocking about. Tears don't do much. If a thing don't suit you, get to work and change it, if you're able; if you hain't, just keep your head turned aside and be a-pretendin' that you don't know it's about. There's more than one trouble has died just because the folks it belonged to got interested in something else.

"Now, when you're looking about town to-day, keep your eyes open, and see if there's a new dress or a hat that you'd like, and we'll go down this very night and see that you get it. I want you



to look as well as the others up there. There's not a bit of use in your going shabby and worn. You'd better turn back here. It will keep you goin' pretty smart to get a bite to eat and be off to school."

He bade her good-by, and she turned and went back to school.

It was well for Marie's class standing that she had prepared her geometry on the previous day, for during the study period, which should have been devoted to its preparation, she found her mind turned to other matters than books. She observed each girl closely, the popular and the unpopular ones, the ones whom she and her friends had set apart as proud, and those whom they had accepted as comrades well met. She was honest with herself in her thoughts. She knew that Sally Platte, Isabel Harvey, Mabel Wade, and Harriet Woodward stood better socially in school than herself.

Time had been when she had put down all such differences in standing as due to money or dress. But now she found that her reasoning must be at fault. The rule did not always hold true. With the exception of Isabel Harvey, she had as much money and lived in as fine a house. And as to clothes!

She smiled as the question presented itself to her mind. These other girls dressed very plainly. Plain shirtwaist suits when the



weather was warm, and the same effect in heavy goods when the cold days came, was all the variation their attire showed. It could not be lessons, for in that she herself had always stood among the first. Nevertheless, there must be some reason for the manifest difference, and Marie made up her mind she would discover what that reason was.

She raised her eyes from the book which lay open before her, but which she had not been studying, and watched the other girls as they entered the assembly-hall. The first were some of her own particular friends. She could not fail to notice their entrance, for the door slammed after them, and they were giggling over something. There were but three of them though they made noise enough for three times as many.

"I thought I'd die," cried one, "to see you, Min, flop right down there beside him, and look as though you were the whole thing, and didn't care a continental for anyone."

"I thought I'd just yell. It was rich, just to see Min freeze him. I hate to see a fellow thrown down like that, and I'd jollied him up, if I'd got a chance, though I don't suppose it would have helped matters along. I never did cut any ice with him so long as Min was on the list."



They paid no attention to Miss Warde, who sat at the desk, not even so much as to bid her good-morning, or, indeed, did they notice anyone else in the room, but continued their chatter and giggling as they crossed the room.

“He may be a dead swell, and all that,” said the girl they had addressed as “Min,” and she affected to be unconscious that all eyes were upon her, “but too much of a good thing is too much. He bores me to death, always talking to me whenever he gets a chance. He seems to think he’s the only pebble—but,” with a simper, and a look about the room, “there——”

“Pass to your desks, young ladies, please, and discontinue that chatter.” Miss Warde spoke sharply for her, and then gave her attention to her reports.

A few moments later, Sally Platte and Mabel Wade came in. If Marie had not been facing the door, she would never have noticed their entrance. Mabel’s cheeks were flushed, her eyes aglow, and her face covered with smiles. They both spoke to Miss Warde as they entered, bidding her good-morning.

Sally Platte turned away from her own desk, and, walking the length of the room, sat down in a seat in front of that in which Kate Hyde sat. Kate was a yellow-haired little girl whose left



hand had been drawn with pain into all sorts of shapes except the right one, until it was almost useless. Sally talked with her a few moments, but in so low a tone that no one else could hear. Marie watched her closely, and after awhile saw her take up a penknife and put points on all of Kate's pencils. It was a characteristic bit of kindness.

Her cheeks flushed as she thought of her conduct in the car last night. No doubt everyone was laughing at her. When she saw Ralph again she would treat him more courteously. Of one thing she was self-assured—she would never be the braggart she had been that day, boasting of her friends and her social attainments.

She met Ralph Orr again in the evening. His great broad shoulders and erect carriage brought into plainer evidence the shabbiness of his dress. But if Poverty were living with him in the cozy relation of a member of his family, his strong face and clear eyes gave no sign that he gave much thought to her presence.

He joined Marie and walked with her several squares down the business part of town. Marie's eyes were on the store windows, and forgetful of the lesson which had been presented to her that



morning, she at once dropped into personalities, and assumed her supercilious, arrogant manner.

“I’m keeping my eyes open to see what sort of new suits they have in. I’ve set my heart on getting something swell. It’s so hard to get anything that’s particularly stylish in a one-horse town like this.”

“They seem to sell a great deal, though. Banks & Taylor, for instance, is always crowded.”

“Yes; they sell enough, such as it is. But if a person is up-to-date, they can’t find anything here that is stylish. Their tailor-made suits are simply horrid. I suppose I’m different from other girls; folks tell me I am; but I simply will not be satisfied with clothes that are behind the times. Now, I have a friend in New York who’s quite up in all that sort of thing, and knows how to dress, and never considers money at all, and she told me six months ago that tabs on the back of jackets were going out. Yet every store here is just bringing them in. It’s so hard to be up-to-date in a place like this.”

She paused. Then she suddenly remembered that Ralph was anything but up-to-date in his dress. She had been thinking only of herself. She had no intention of hurting him.



"Of course," she began hurriedly, lest he might feel that her words had been intended for him, "while I'm fond of dress for myself, and try not to look like one of last year's calendars, I'm not snob enough to think less of anyone who don't dress up-to-date. I choose my friends for what they are, and it matters little to me whether they're swells or not. I try to forget their shabby clothes."

"How exceedingly generous, Miss O'Brien," he said. His tone had a touch of irony in it that displeased Marie, and while his face was grave, there was a humorous twinkle in his eye which she noted, and knew at once that he was inclined to laugh at her.

"I am going down this street," he said, and bidding her good-afternoon, turned down a cross-street.

She stood on the corner awaiting a car. She bit her lips to keep them from trembling. The tears stood in her eyes, but she kept them back.

"Will I never learn anything?" she said to herself. "This is worse than yesterday."

She took the first vacant seat in the car, and kept her eyes toward the window. "I suppose I'll never learn to keep my mouth shut," she kept saying to herself. It was a relief when she reached home and could cry away her vexation.



## CHAPTER V.

### A NEW REGIME.



WHEN Marie reached home, and went around to the back part of the house, she found the kitchen hot, hot as a bake-oven. I know not whether bake-ovens are any hotter than roasting ovens or not, but certainly the room was badly overheated with a fire for the ironing, and Mrs. O'Brien, seeking comfort, had slipped on a blue Mother Hubbard wrapper, and was working over the ironing-board.

Marie sat down near the door, and, taking off her hat, slowly fanned herself.

"Why don't you let it go until to-morrow? I should think you'd die here."

"I wanted to put up peaches to-morrow, and the clothes'll mildew if I let them lay. I'd a been done long ago, but Mrs. Diller called me over, and I got to talkin' and forgot almost that I hadn't finished



ironing. It's large and hard, too. You had four white petticoats, all trimmed, yourself, Marie."

Marie made no reply. She fanned herself more vigorously.

"Go in where it's cool. There's no use your sittin' there a-swelterin'."

"I'll iron some." She went to the basket, and, turning about the few pieces that remained, found one of the four petticoats.

"I'll iron this. You go in and get cool."

"No; I'd rather go on now. There's no use of your blistering your hands. I'm used to the kitchen, and don't mind it much. I wish you'd go away! It bothers me to see you looking so red and hot."

Marie turned to the door. "Where's Gladys?"

"Don't you hear her? She's been playing out there all day with those Albright youngsters, happy as can be, and singin' for all she's worth. I wouldn't be at all surprised, Marie, not one bit, if she beat you all to pieces with her voice. Just hear her."

"She does catch a tune easy."

Marie stood looking through the screen at the children, who were unconscious of her presence. Gladys was singing a tune she had heard Marie play. For an instant Marie did not understand



her. Then floating up in her sweet, childish voice came the words of a silly and slangy music-hall chorus.

"I wouldn't let her play with those Albrights," said Marie.

"Why? She ain't got anyone else. She was pleased enough to have them come in, and, goodness knows, I was glad enough to have them come, so I could manage to get a little work done. She's always trotting about after me to tell her stories or to sing to her. You've spoiled her, Marie, with singin' and playin' for her so much. She seems to think that that's about all that's got to be done about the house."

"Gladys, come here!" called Marie.

Gladys quickly dropped her play, and ran to Marie.

"Come with me. I want you." She drew her into the dining-room.

"Sing to me! Play for me!" she cried, beginning her own song again: "When Maggie Ann Maloney——"

"I wouldn't sing that. It doesn't sound nice for little girls."

"You sang it to me. That's where I got it. Sing it to me now!"

"No; we are going to do something else. I want you to help. It's a surprise, and we must hurry."



“What is it?”

Marie drew Gladys to her, and told her plan. At first, she did not seem enthusiastic, but after the exercise of some diplomacy on Marie's part, she became quite eager.

They closed and locked the door into the kitchen, and, then, as fast as her high heels would permit, Marie hurried to and fro, followed by Gladys, who kept time to her heels with scraps of all the “coon songs” that composed her sister's repertoire.

“Now we'll go up-stairs,” said Marie. “I hope mother won't open that dining-room door before we want her to. Daddy won't know what's struck this house, will he?”

She carried Gladys into her own bedroom and, filling the basin with water, and with a plentiful supply of soap, she began to lather and scrub the poor child's neck and ears and her dirty legs. Gladys bore it all patiently, keeping before her mind the reward to follow.

After her thorough scrubbing, Marie arranged her hair, and dressed her in a simple white dress.

“There!” she cried, pushing her aside that she might get a better view of her, “you're all right. You looked like a dago in that dirty old gingham, and your face all black.”



Gladys surveyed herself with pleasure. She softly patted the white dress.

"Can I keep it on all the time?"

"No; indeed. Why, it would look as bad as the gingham if you'd be wearing it out to mix mud cakes. But, Gladys, I'll fix you up like this every evening, if you promise to keep clean, and won't play with those Albrights. You won't?"

"You can bet," said Gladys.

"I wouldn't talk like that. Say 'yes' or 'no.' "

"That's what you said. Isn't it nice to say?"

Marie gave no answer. Gladys' parrot-like way of repeating had always annoyed her.

After dressing Gladys, Marie went back to the kitchen. Mrs. O'Brien had started to prepare the supper.

"I'll do this," said Marie, "if you want to go in where it's cool."

"I'd much rather see to it myself. You'd only have your dress all spotted up, and, goodness knows, you're hard enough on your clothes, now. Why, you had four trimmed petticoats in the wash this week, and they were horribly dirty, Marie."

"I have the table set in the dining-room. So much is ready."



“In the dining-room? I don’t see any use in that! It always seems as though you’re tryin’ to put on airs. The kitchen’s big enough. Everyone around here eats in the kitchen. If they’d come in they’d think we were tryin’ to be fashionable.”

Marie tossed her head. “Why shouldn’t we be if we want to? Where’s the harm? For my part, I’d a sight rather be fashionable than the other thing. Though I don’t suppose it’s much use trying.”

Gladys had been slow in following Marie down-stairs. Now she danced into the room, spreading out her white dress to catch her mother’s attention, and singing, “When Maggie Ann Maloney gets an eighteen carat jag.”

“Now, Marie!” Mrs. O’Brien stopped in her efforts to turn the ham in the frying pan, and with one hand holding the fork suspended in the air, and the other grasping the front of her wrapper to prevent it touching the stove, looked upon Gladys’ appearance as something at which to be vastly annoyed. “Now, Marie, you don’t mean you went and put all clean clothes on that child? Whatever’s got into you? Why, you know I never fix her up unless she’s going some place. The washin’s are big enough now, goodness knows. If they get much larger, I’m sure I don’t know how they’ll get done.”



"I'll help. Haven't I always been willing?"

"Yes; I ain't complainin' about that. But I hate to see you slop about and get your hands all rough. I've never wanted you to do heavy work."

"I got tired seeing Gladys looking like a dago. Don't she look sweet now?" She stooped and rearranged the child's hair, and kissed her, while Gladys continued her humming.

"I wouldn't sing that song, Gladys."

"Why? You used to sing it."

"Sister will get a prettier song for you—some day."

When the supper hour came, Mr. O'Brien looked about him in surprise.

"Well, this is great," he said. "Did you do this, Mary?"

"I'm the one. It's all right, ain't it? I just abominate eating in the kitchen. What's the use of having a dining-room if it ain't to be used?"

"I told her," began Mrs. O'Brien, "that the neighbors, if they come in, would think we were gettin' dreadful high-toned."

"It wouldn't make much difference as long as it suits us. For my part, I like it. It rests me to see a nice white cloth, and the flowers look fine. It doesn't cost any money, so why shouldn't we



have them, and even if they did cost, no one ought to fuss much about spending if they're getting what they want for their money. Let Mary be high-toned if she wants to. For my part, I'd like to see her that."

"It looks nice enough," began Mrs. O'Brien, "I ain't meanin' to complain. Only it does make more work, but so long as Marie likes to set the table, and carry the things from the kitchen, I'm sure I shan't say much. Only I never feel like coming in the dining-room, and settin' down to eat with a wrapper on."

Marie served the butter and vegetables as she had seen Mrs. Platte serve. Perhaps unconsciously even to herself, she had followed them in the arrangement of the table, and the flower decoration, though she would have spurned the idea that she was copying anyone, or that she was in any way influenced by others. Yet her dinner with Sally Platte had made her restless and dissatisfied with the free and easy manner of doing things which was the O'Brien family custom.

In her heart she desired something. What it was, or how to acquire it, she knew not. But an ideal was slowly forming in her mind, and by little steps she was slowly making her way toward a clearer light. She felt like a conqueror as she served the side dishes,



and looked about on the white cloth, the best dishes, the flowers, and Gladys, dainty and sweet, sitting opposite her.

“Did you see about a new suit to-day, Mary?” her father asked.

“Yes; I saw a fine suit at Bachman’s. It’s one of those bright blues, with light Persian trimming on the waist and sleeves. It had a bright green silk drop-skirt. It was stylish, and wasn’t very dear.”

Mr. O’Brien slowly buttered his huge slice of bread, and thought the matter over before he answered.

“I don’t believe I’d get a dress of just that kind, Mary.”

“They are all the rage. I saw at least a dozen of that style on the streets to-day.”

“That’s why, Mary. I believe I’d get something a little different, something everybody won’t have, and you won’t get tired of; and those bright dresses covered with trimmings are apt to get spotted and soiled, and then they don’t look at all well. I’d get a nice trim blue suit or plain brown—silk lining if you want it—but don’t get gaudy colors. The superintendent’s girl looked well, and she was dressed plain; nothing strikin’ about her. But she looked well, and when she took off her hat, her hair looked just like satin. It was brushed and cleaned up so.”



Marie turned to her mother.

“Father’s talking all the time about that superintendent’s girl. He’s always telling how trim she looks. But I know she pays someone to clean and brush her hair. ’Most all of them do.”

“Well, mebbe they do. It looks well, and makes her look well. I’d be willing to pay most anything if yours would look like that, Mary. Did you want to go down street to-night and look at some of those suits?”

“I can’t to-night. Clara Wagner and Liz are comin’ in. Liz has some new songs. I thought we’d go to-morrow night.”

“If the young folks are comin’ in, I’ll slip off up-stairs. I don’t look fit to be seen,” said Mrs. O’Brien.

“Why don’t you fix yourself up?” said Mr. O’Brien.

“’Tain’t much use. They don’t come to see me. Young folks are not apt to care for the old people.”

Mr. O’Brien arose. “I think I’ll go over to Jack’s awhile. Some of the men are coming over there.”

After he had gone, Mrs. O’Brien burst into tears.

“He’s gettin’ to go over there all the time, and he’ll be goin’



to the bad, as every man does that goes to Jack's. But he won't stay home. He hasn't been here an evening for weeks."

Marie thought over the matter. It was quite true. Her father did spend the greater part of his leisure time at Jack's.







## CHAPTER VI.

### NEW IDEALS.



HERE were but few on the car the next morning when Marie boarded it. At Second Street two young men entered and sat back of her. She had caught a glimpse of them as they waited at the crossing and recognized them as belonging to what she called the "swell set." They paid little attention to the people about them but began to talk at once.

"I was never up in this part of the city before. Is this where the big car shops are?"

"Yes! You should see them. They're fine. Make everything, from a tack to a steam engine. Have several thousand men working here. The names are the worst things about the place. 'Swamppoodle,' and 'Stump Street.'"

"Yes, I've heard enough of the place and names, but I never have been up this way. Ralph says it isn't a bad sort of place, and one of the best to collect in. Everybody lives by the month. Pay



their bills on the fifteenth—that's the monthly pay-day in the shops. He comes up here several days each month."

"Isn't this the place that girl that he talked so much about lives? You know Aunt Clara was running on him about his Irish friend with the French name."

"Oh, that Miss O'Brean. Yes; I don't know where he met her. I never saw her for my part. Her father is master mechanic, and a splendid workman, they say."

"What sort of a girl is the daughter? I was surprised that Ralph seemed so much interested. He was so intent in getting on with his school-work, and collecting, that he hadn't time to call anywhere, except, of course, among the cousins. I know he called up here, though."

"Yes, I never saw her. Jim told me, though, I'd be more surprised when I saw the girl. She's the sort—like those McGinnesses we had at school—wears silk all the time, talks slang so you can hear her a square away, and chews gum; that style, you know. They say she's the brightest girl in the high school, but no culture, you know. I rather fancy Ralph has had enough of her."

"Oh, I thought they were friends yet."

"No; Jim told me. He went up on the car one night with





“THAT BIT OF HELIOTROPE GIVES IT QUITE A FLAVOR.”







Ralph. The car was pretty well crowded and this Miss —— What's her name? I always forget it—got on the car. Ralph had on a rough looking suit, and she snubbed him unmercifully. Then she made matters worse by trying to smooth over affairs. She has a nice father, though. She don't get her snobbishness from him."

"Here's our getting-off place, Ned."

They left the car, passing close to Marie; but never having seen her, they did not know how interested she had been in their conversation.

Her cheeks had grown scarlet, and her eyes had filled with tears. For a moment she was intensely angry, but after they left the car she had time to think over the matter. They had said nothing that was not true. Though it was the truth, yet it hurt. She kept her eyes upon the window. She dared not trust herself to meet the gaze of any of the passengers, lest she should burst into tears.

By the time she had walked a square, and come to the high school building she was able to control herself. Then there sprang into bloom a bit of nobility in her nature. In place of treasuring up resentful and hard feelings against those who had criticised her, as soon as she recognized that the criticism was just, she resolved



that it would no longer be true if she could help it; and she would help it.

She stopped long enough in the cloak-room—fortunately it was unoccupied except by herself—to look herself over. Her shoes were run over, and the laces worn and knotted, and her skirts were draggled. Not one whole item in her entire toilette was as it should be.

Had she done as she first thought, she would have sat down and cried, and then given the whole affair up as something not worth her effort. But she overcame this first weakness. Her eyes flashed and she set her lips firmly together.

“They were right,” she said to herself. “I’m all slang and tawdry. I’m bright enough, but that’s all the more shame for me. If I were dull, no one would expect much of me. But they shall respect me. I’ll make them.”

She turned to the school-room. Suddenly to her mind came the picture of the girls of the morning before. She slackened her rapid pace, closed the door after her with her hand upon the knob, and entered the room so quietly that no one except Miss Warde heard her. Miss Warde looked after her in surprise, for the girl had greeted her on entering the room.



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Marie always mastered her lessons with great ease. Her lesson in geometry for the morning had been prepared the day before. She took out her book and laid it open before her, but as usual she let her glance wander about the room, and it settled at last upon Miss Warde's bowed head.

For three years Marie had recited to this teacher, but being much wrapped up in herself, she had given no thought to the teacher and her work. Now she noticed that Miss Warde looked worn out. Like the memory of an uncertain dream, there came to her a long-forgotten story of Miss Warde's delicate health, and the burdens she had taken upon herself to bear for others. Perhaps this remembrance, or it may have been the talk she had overheard that morning, compelled her to get upon her feet and go to Miss Warde as she began laboriously to copy some original problems upon the board.

"May I write them for you, Miss Warde?" she asked, taking up a piece of crayon and standing ready.

"I would be more than glad," she replied. "It tires me to reach so high."

"What has come to your Miss O'Brean?" said Miss Morrison to Miss Warde some time later. "Is she really doing something for some one besides herself? What have you done with her?"



"I? Nothing at all. I gave her up some months ago. I fancy she has worked her own way to where the path divides, and finds she must make her own choice where she will walk."

During the morning the rain began, and when noon hour came it was falling in torrents.

"You must not think of going home, Marie," said Sally Platte, coming up to her in the cloak-room. "You must come home with me."

Marie did not hesitate as she had done before when the invitation had been given her. Quick as thought it came to her that if she wished to be as these cultivated, refined people, the best lesson she could have would be to mingle with them. What if she did feel awkward and knew not what to say, her acceptance and presence among them might be like a bitter dose of medicine, hard to take but warranted to cure. Then, too, she had learned about the finger bowls. That was one item in her favor now.

"Thank you, I shall be glad to go," she said. When they reached the Platte home, she was careful not to lead the conversation.

"It was raining so hard that I telephoned Ralph not to go home, but to come here for dinner," said Mrs. Platte, after the girls



had rid themselves of their wet wraps and had come into the living-room.

Marie's face flushed. She thought at once of Ralph Orr, and after her rudeness of the day before dreaded to meet him. Yet, on second thought, she decided that it could not be he. There were Ralphs and Ralphs, and perhaps this one was a Ralph that she had never met.

She was soon relieved of her uncertainty, however, for the hall door opened and some one, after putting his hat and umbrella aside, came into the room, exclaiming in a bright, cheery voice as he did so, "Well, Aunt Clara, here I am. The rain is something dreadful."

Marie recognized the voice, and felt as though she could not raise her eyes and meet those of the boy she had snubbed. She had been ashamed of his shabby coat, and had wondered what Sally Platte and her exclusive set would think of him in his coat with the shiny elbows, and shabby hat, and here he was one of them. She thought, too, of the afternoon in the car when she had boasted of her invitation to the Platte home. If she could have slipped away and hidden herself, she would have done so. She sat awkwardly



in her chair, afraid to raise her eyes and meet his glance. But his attitude spared her further embarrassment.

“And Miss O’Brean, too,” he said gayly. “Why, this is lovely! Aunt Clara, you must be giving a dinner party instead of a ‘drop in for lunch.’ ”

“You know Miss O’Brean?” Mrs. Platte also gave the name the pronunciation which Marie had adopted on her entrance into the high school.

“Yes; we are quite old acquaintances,” he replied.

Marie thought of the expression one of the young men in the car had used. “The Irish girl with the French name.” It seemed as though she were ashamed of her people and her name.

“I may never be quiet and easy and well-bred like Sally Platte,” she thought, “but I won’t be sham. I won’t be shoddy. I’ll be myself and be honest.”

“You all miscall my name,” she said quietly. “I gave it in that way when I entered the high school, but the correct way is ‘O’Brien.’ ”

“Very well! We shall call you that,” said Mrs. Platte, as though changing the pronunciation of one’s name were the most natural thing in the world, and an every-day occurrence.



During her stay at noon, and at the dinner-table, she did not take the lead in the conversation, but kept her eyes open and her wits about her. She was afraid that because of her blunder of the previous visit, Sally Platte would not pass the finger bowl. Marie was anxious that she should. She knew now what should be done, and she wished to put her knowledge to use.

Sally did as before. When she presented the bowl to her, Marie dipped the tips of her fingers and dried them upon the napkin. As she did so, the humor of the previous experience came suddenly to her. In one instant she saw how trivial and foolish her pride was. She looked up into Sally's face and smiled. All her self-conscious, supercilious manner had gone.

"I won't drink it this time," she said good-naturedly, and the three others laughed, and then Marie explained the cause of their mirth to Ralph. He joined in the laugh, and secretly admired the girl, who could see the humorous side of her blunders and learn to do the right thing at the same time.

"Who is going to take first honors this year?" asked Ralph, when the conversation had veered around to school matters.

"Everyone thinks Marie will," said Sally Platte. "She's ahead



now, but I am not far behind. I shall take them if I can, if hard study can do it. Marie learns easily, but I must study."

"Sometimes I think you keep too close to your work, Sally," said Mrs. Platte. "You have neglected your friends, and put aside all your social life for books. Why not be satisfied with second or third place? You are not as strong as Marie, and you do not learn so easily."

"It is not all selfish," she replied. "I have a reason back of all the empty honors—a reason that none but myself know."

They had risen from the table. Perhaps if Mrs. Platte had seen the glance that Sally Platte bestowed upon her father as with his shoulders stooped, he moved from the table and coughed with the effort, she would have understood.

Marie saw the look, and knew that whatever Sally's plans were, they were not selfish. Sally was capable of great sacrifice where those she loved were concerned.

Within Marie arose a kindred spirit of heroism. She would find out the reason of Sally's great ambition, and—there Marie paused in her thoughts. Some things were as dear to her as to Sally Platte, and class honors were not the least of them. Never-



theless, when they were alone, she asked Sally Platte her reason for desiring the honors.

“I have told no one,” she replied. “I did not intend telling anyone until I won them, and that might never be.”

“But I must know,” said Marie. “You must tell me.” She was not thinking of herself then. Her mind was on greater things, so her voice was unaffected, and her manner earnest and sweet.

Sally made no reply. They walked in silence to the cloak-room door before she spoke again.








## CHAPTER VII.

### A SHOPPING EXCURSION.

T was not an improbable plan that Sally Platte divulged to Marie. Her secret was to make life a little easier for those she loved. Her eyes filled with tears as she talked:

“Perhaps you have noticed, Marie, that my father is not well. His lungs are not strong, and this year the doctors told him that the best thing for him to do was to have a change of climate. Father did not tell me. I went to Dr. Ryan myself and insisted until he told me. Neither father nor mother knows that I have been told. Father simply cannot go on account of money. He and mother have planned that I should go to the training school after I graduate. The little bit of money father has saved is for that. I think he feels that it will not be long until mother and I must take care of each other, and he wishes me prepared to do some work.”

She paused. This was not a subject on which she could talk



without emotion. She busied herself in arranging her wraps and kept her face turned from Marie.

“Now, you know, Marie, that the girl who has the highest marks will be given the position of cadet teacher. That is almost as good as one year of the training school, besides I—that is, if I ever am a cadet—will get fifteen dollars a month.

“Now my plan is this: I want the honors—I am going to take them if work will do it. We can rent our house, I can stay here and teach, and father and mother can take the money that they have saved to send me to school, and live a year or two in a better climate than this. I can live with auntie, and I shall manage to live on fifteen dollars a month. It all rests on my taking the honors.”

“But you have not taken them yet,” said Marie coldly, considering the interest she had shown before. “I have been a trifle ahead of you since the beginning.”

“I acknowledge that. I know what I must work against. But I have been getting closer to you every month. You learn easier than I do, but when I once learn, I remember it. My examinations are always better than my class recitations. I may do wonders in six months if I work.”



"Yes; you may if you work, but there will be others working as hard as you."

"You are not encouraging, Marie."

"Should I be? I want the honors myself for no other reason than that I want them, and I mean to study for them. Do you blame me?"

"No; I should not like it if you would do less than your best on account of me. I want the honors, but I want them to be worthy of the name. The hardest part for me is that the extra study takes too much of my time. Mother and I do like to be together a little of each day, and go about some. But this fall I have been in my room at work every evening and a great part of Saturdays. I told mother yesterday that she might as well have no daughter at all for all the company I am. It really seems so. I have always felt so sorry for girls—and mothers too—when they never seem to go about much together. I see no use in mothers having daughters if they are not company or pleasure to them."

Marie made no reply. Perhaps Sally's words came a little too close to describing conditions in the O'Brien household to be altogether pleasant to her.



The last gong sounded, and without more talk they entered the assembly-room and separated.

Marie spent some time after school in visiting a music store, and after reaching home, having given Gladys a bath and dressed her and put the table in order for supper, she sat down at the piano and practiced some of the new songs she had selected that afternoon.

After a while she called to Gladys to come to her.

"Listen while I sing you a new song. What do you think of this?"

Gladys listened. A rapt expression came upon her face.

"What do you think of that?" asked Marie, turning about on the stool.

The child's face glowed with pleasure.

"It's good. Play it again."

"It is better than 'Maggie Ann Maloney'?"

The child nodded. "Play it some more, Marie. I want to sing it." Marie turned back to the piano.

"Come, sing the words after me."

Gladys came closer and, catching the simple little air, sang after Marie the words:



“Sleep, baby, sleep,  
Thy father’s watching the sheep,  
Thy mother’s shaking the dreamland tree,  
And down drops a little dream for thee.  
Sleep, baby, sleep.

Sleep, baby, sleep,  
The large stars are the sheep,  
The little stars are the lambs, I guess;  
The bright moon is the shepherdess.  
Sleep, baby, sleep.”

As they sang, Marie heard her mother pass up-stairs and into her bedroom, but she and Gladys continued their singing until Mr. O’Brien passed the window on the way to the kitchen. They both hurried to meet him. Mrs. O’Brien was in the kitchen dishing up the supper when they entered, and Marie gave an exclamation of surprise.

“Why, what have you been doing, mother?” she exclaimed.

Mrs. O’Brien looked down with complacency upon her black dress and white apron.

“What have I been doing? Well, I don’t know but what I’ve as good a right to be fixed up as anyone. No one else seems to be



anxious to save the washin' and ironin', and I don't see why I should. You should be the last one to say anything about me wearin' clean aprons. Why, you had four white petticoats yourself in the wash this week, and all of them trimmed."

"I know," replied Marie. "I'm sure that I'm not complaining. I like to see you dressed up, and if the washings are large, you don't have to do them all by yourself, I'm sure; I'm always ready to help along. If you'd call me, we'd have the clothes out before school time."

"Oh, I know you're always willing enough. You never was lazy, but I'd like to know what your hands 'd be like, sloppin' around in the water and burnin' them with irons. I don't like to see a girl lookin' as though she came from a tub. It's bad enough for old women like me. The time'll come when you may have to do it, but take it easy until you do."

"Now, don't be makin' yourself out an old woman," said Mr. O'Brien, coming in. "Why, folks would take you for your own daughter, seein' how fine you look now. And as to washin', there's no need of your doin' it at all. I'll send a good stout woman around here next Monday, and I don't want to see you touchin' the tubs. You can be goin' about in white aprons and frizzled



hair all the time. 'There's no need of your workin' yourself to death or not fixin' up.'

Her cheeks flushed and her eyes brightened.

"I thought none of you was carin' or thinkin' how I looked. It's got to be that when women ain't no longer young, they're shoved aside. I got to thinkin' my time had come for the shove."

"Nonsense! Nonsense! You're just at the best of life."

They passed on into the dining-room. Marie grew suddenly quiet. Her perceptions were keen enough so that she saw things when they were plainly put before her. Her mother's words touched her. For the first time in her life, Marie realized that her mother had been a young girl once, perhaps with such dreams and ambitions as she had, and even now Mrs. O'Brien was yet a young woman, and an attractive woman when she took the trouble to appear her best. Marie could not rid herself of the words—"I thought my time had come to be shoved aside with the rest."

Another thought had come to her at not infrequent intervals during the day. Her father was spending so much of his time at Jack's place, and Marie knew that many a man had been ruined there. Sally Platte was willing to make any sacrifice for the ones



she loved: "Surely," said Marie to herself, "I am as strong as Sally Platte."

When the meal was finished, Mr. O'Brien arose and said: "I'm going over to Jack's awhile. I'll be back, Mary, if you want to go down the street."

"Oh, wait just a minute," she cried, "and hear the new song Gladys has learned."

Gladys capered about. "Come and hear it, daddy. It ain't no coon song."

He followed them into the parlor and listened to the song, neither well sung nor well played, but it pleased him better than any music he had heard before.

"That's great, Marie. To my notion, it sounds heaps better than those songs you've been singin'. They may be all right for nigger minstrels, but they don't sound ladylike."

"Say, daddy, I've changed my mind about that silk-lined dress. I'm going to get some blue goods and have a waist and skirt made and wear white collars with it. It will last longer, and won't cost nearly so much."

"I want you to get what looks well and what you want. I don't care what it costs so long as it's the right thing for a girl to



have. I don't want you never to think that I'm stingy with you. I want you to have as much as the other girls up there. Don't stop because you think I'd be countin' the pennies."

"It wasn't that." She arose from the piano stool, and going to the sofa and sitting down beside him slipped her arm through his. "I never thought about your caring for the money; but I was thinkin' of mother. She needs it more than I do."

"Well, it's her own fault. She has the run of the purse. She could get what she wants. I've never told her not to. It's hers as much as mine."

"It isn't that, daddy. She knows she could spend it all, but I think she'd like us to insist and be interested and tell her what to get and go along with her to buy it. All the girls down around that part of the city run around with their mothers and help buy."

"Well, there's none better than my girl. Perhaps she does want us to be fussin', but I never thought of that. We will all go together to-night, and we'll see to it that she gets a complete lay-out, and we won't let her say no. Tell her to let the dishes stand. We'll start now and take our time."

Mrs. O'Brien mechanically laid aside her apron, dried her hands on the kitchen towel, and set out with them. She selected her new



dress and hat and gloves as mechanically as she dried her hands. She gave no sign of surprise or delight. Her expression did not change. She was more quiet than usual.

Marie was disappointed. She had hoped her mother would grow enthusiastic over the pleasant time they were all having together.

It was not until they reached home that Mrs. O'Brien expressed herself. She passed at once into the sitting-room and, without removing her hat, sat down in a rocker. When the others came into the room, she burst into tears.


"I thought all the time that neither of you cared how I looked or what I had. I thought all you wanted of me was to wash and scrub and cook. I'd been feelin' all along that my time to be shoved aside had come. I can't tell you how glad I am that you care—both of you."

"Why, mother!" Then to make matters worse, Marie sat down and cried, too, and Mr. O'Brien walked up and down the room, declaring it was all nonsense, and trying his best to keep the tears from his own eyes.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE HONOR GIRL.

URING the winter and following spring, Marie relaxed not in her study. Sally Platte kept close, and when the reports for May came, there were but a few points difference in their marks.

In the meantime Marie had gone often to the Plattes' upon their cordial invitation, and Sally and Isabel had visited her at her home.

From this time forth Mrs. O'Brien had no cause to think her time had come to be "shoved aside." She derived a vast amount of enjoyment from her tailor-made gown and becoming hat, and with her husband and daughter she had attended all the high school lectures and had gone down into the city shopping, and altogether had had the best time of her life. In her younger years she had been as ambitious as her daughter, and as trim of body and pretty of face. She had never enjoyed the advantages of school as



Marie, but she had better taste in dress, and was quick to see and understand. Now, when she felt again that she was yet young and well-dressed, and that her husband and daughter were both fond and proud of her, her ambition and energy returned.

On Friday afternoons she came down to the high school and listened to the debates and papers with as much interest as Marie. One evening as they came home together she stopped before a bookstore.

“We’ll stop in here,” she said, “and get a few good, reliable papers. The young man who talked last up there spoke of candidates and governors, and Republicans and Democrats and platforms and mugwumps and planks and issues, and so many things that he seemed to think we should know all about, and I hadn’t a notion what he meant at all. I was ashamed of myself sittin’ there and pretendin’ I did. It all comes of not readin’ and keepin’ interested. I’ll order a good paper and have it sent up to the house, and I’ll read up on those things, and I want you to read them, too, Marie. You’re all interested in books, and don’t seem to notice what’s goin’ on around about you. That man was all right when he said ‘History was bein’ made every day, and you should keep your eyes on the process.’ ”



Marie made no reply, but stood aside watching her mother as she looked over the papers, and, selecting one which seemed to contain the most political news, gave orders to have it sent up to their home each day.

“When I was your age,” she said as she left the store, “it wasn’t considered genteel or ladylike for girls to know about voting, caucuses, and politics, and the way you girls study about your bodies and talk of livers and stomachs and lungs wouldn’t have been considered decent. I went into a school one day and heard children, no bigger than Mary Diller, get up and tell about the stomach and liver, and what work was goin’ on in them all the time. I’ve just begun to realize what I missed—what we all missed that went to school twenty years ago. But I’ve more time now and I mean to study about these things. To-morrow you bring one of those books home and I’ll read it over.”

“A physiology, you mean?”

“Yes; I was tellin’ Mrs. Diller. She said she’d try to run in and have me read it to her. She hain’t had much chance, but she’s always been a-wantin’ to know. I could be helpin’ her along while I’m learnin’ myself.”

The situation was proving too much for Marie. Six months



before she had been far ahead of her mother in culture and general intelligence, and had considered herself, and had been considered by others of the family, as the fountain-head of wisdom. She had taken the lead and expressed the opinion for the family. But the old order had changed in these six months. She was falling to the rear. Here was her mother discussing the question of the Philippines, and debating whether manual training should be introduced into the common schools, and inquiring at the library for Eugene Field's or James Whitcomb Riley's poems.

For Gladys' sake Marie had given up singing "coon" songs and was ever on the alert to find something new and sweet for the little lady at home. Marie despaired at times of ever overcoming her loud, boisterous manner and her use of slang, but she was quite determined that Gladys should not labor under the same disadvantage as herself. She found games and plays and songs for her, and kept her from the rough-and-tumble element that played in the streets, and all the while kept a trifle ahead in the class until every member was confident she would take the honors. As for Marie herself, she never mentioned "honors" after that day when she had talked with Sally Platte.

In the second week in June came the final examinations.



Latin, algebra, English, and German passed off well. Sally Platte and Marie stood even here. Yet because of the class recitations during the year, Marie stood first.

"I've given up all hope," said Sally Platte on the morning of the examination in geometry. "Geometry is my worst study, and Marie's best!"

Marie smiled at the remark. "Hang on to the last, though. You never know what may happen."

"But the days of miracles are past."

"But not of sacrifice," said Marie. Sally did not understand.

They entered the class-room. The other members were already at work. They picked up paper and a sheet of printed questions as they passed Miss Warde's table, and, going to their desks, began to work.

The work was not difficult. For more than an hour nothing except the moving of papers and the hurried movement of fifty or more pens was heard in the room. Then one by one the students, as they finished, handed their work to Miss Warde and left the room. Marie continued her writing. When the rest had gone she took one sheet on which she had labored hard, and, twisting it about, threw it into the waste-basket. Then, arranging the others, she handed



them to Miss Warde and was about to pass from the room, when Miss Warde called her attention to the papers.

“Did you know, Miss O’Brien, that you have handed in but seven problems? There were ten.”

“Yes; I know. But there are only seven on my paper.”

“How odd that you should fail on the three simplest ones! The most difficult you have worked out beautifully. Can’t you solve the others? You may have more time.”

“No, Miss Warde. Mark what I have handed you;” and she left the room.

Miss Warde passed to the back of the room. The large sheet of examination paper which Marie had tossed into the basket was quite prominent. Unconscious of any reason for doing so, Miss Warde stooped, picked up the paper, and, smoothing it out on the window-sill, looked it over. It contained the three theorems, all demonstrated in Marie’s writing, which she had failed to hand in with the remainder of the work.

For a moment Miss Warde thought that Marie must have tossed her paper aside by mistake. Yet she remembered that she had seen the girl read the paper before she so calmly and deliberately



gave it a twist and threw it away. Then, too, she had told her to mark the seven.

Miss Warde could not understand. The girl had handed in the most difficult problems, and had seemingly failed on three easy little theorems that even the dullest in the class could have demonstrated.

Suddenly there came to her the remembrance of a conversation she had heard between Marie and Sally one day in the cloak-room. Sally Platte had been telling of her reasons for taking the honors. Miss Warde had observed the growing intimacy between the girls, and thought she understood.

Yet she had never believed that anyone could be so unselfish as this proved Marie to be, making such heroic self-sacrifice with no sound of trumpet or peal of bells to sweeten the giving up. For a moment Miss Warde was tempted to take the paper and give Marie credit for the three that she had not handed in. The girl had done the best work and deserved the honors. Yet, on second thought, she threw the paper aside. She would not spoil this sacrifice. Marie had taken upon herself a greater honor than any examinations could grant her.

To the surprise of everyone except Miss Warde and Marie,



Sally Platte took the class honors. What was more surprising was Marie's happy acceptance of the fact. She received the expressions of sympathy from her friends with as joyous a spirit as though they were offering congratulations.

Marie could not understand Miss Warde's attitude toward her. The relation between them had not been nearer than the ordinary one of pupil and teacher. But she was the first to come to Marie, and, taking her by the hand, said: "In my mind, Marie, you have taken higher honors than any high school can grant."

Isabel Harvey entertained the class and its friends at her home, and Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien were among the guests. Ralph Orr, too, was there, with Sally Platte, yet Marie was one with them. As she stood talking to him, she looked across the parlor to where her mother was listening to Judge Harvey. He was an enthusiast on the Philippine question. Marie watched her mother's face aglow with interest, and the girl's heart was satisfied.

She stood in a little alcove watching the guests pass and repass. She was waiting the return of Ralph, who had gone in search of Sally Platte. While she waited, Miss Warde, in company with some dignified elderly gentleman, passed near her.

"Yes, Miss Platte"—Miss Warde was speaking—"is our honor



girl this year. She is an exceptionally fine girl; but the brightest girl in the class is Miss O'Brien. She did excellent work for three years. She was a girl I mistook at first. I discovered in her one of the most generous and self-sacrificing dispositions I have ever known; but she kept all her nobility of character veneered with a supercilious, arrogant manner. It took some of us a long time to learn what she really is, and to do her reverence." They passed on.

Marie sank back and drew the curtains closer. To her right were standing the two young men who had criticised her so severely in the car that morning—so long ago it seemed now. They, too, had heard Miss Warde's words.

"Did you meet Miss O'Brien?" asked one of the other.

"Yes; I was surprised. She's as nice in her manner as the other girls. I thought from what I've been told that she was slangy and loud, and I wondered why Ralph should like her, because he's not been used to that sort of girl. Aunt Clara Platte says that she doesn't seem like the same girl, and thinks she has fine principles."

"Well, you know Ralph always said that she was fine when you once knew her. It was only her way of dressing and being affected at times that anyone could object to."



“Well, he don’t seem to be objecting about even that. Did you see him taking her about this evening?”

At that moment Ralph came hurrying up with Sally Platte. The young men wheeled about, saw Marie, turned all sorts of colors, and then did the best thing they could under the circumstances. They went to another part of the room, out of sight and hearing of the trio.

“Marie, I have good news,” cried Sally Platte. “Father and mother leave for Colorado next week.”

Marie smiled. She could not answer.

THE END















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